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FELON SENTENCED IN POSSESSION OF FIREARM CASE

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono announced that Charles Leach 39, of Nashua, New Hampshire was sentenced today in United States District Court in Concord for being a Felon in Possession of a Firearm. Chief Judge Paul Barbadoro sentenced Mr. Leach to serve two and a half years (30 months) in federal prison to be followed by three years of supervised release.

Mr. Leach had previously entered a guilty plea to the charge on May 17, 2002.

In June 2001, federal, state and local officers executed approximately 20 federal and state search warrants in Nashua and Hampton Beach, NH. The search warrants were executed pursuant to an investigation which targeted drug trafficking in food and drink establishments in Hampton Beach and Nashua. The investigation also involved federal wire intercepts coupled with a one year and half grand jury investigation and extensive physical surveillance.

Law enforcement officers executed one of the search warrants at Leach's residence and recovered a 22 caliber pistol. Leach was previously convicted of felonious vehicular assault in Maine.

In commenting on the sentence, United States Attorney Colantuono stated, "keeping firearms out of the hands of convicted felons is a major priority for this office. When they are caught, we are going to make sure they are aggressively prosecuted and punished."

The case was investigated by the New Hampshire State Police, the Nashua Police Department, the New Hampshire Attorney Generals Drug Task Force, and the Drug Enforcement Administration's MET Team of Boston, with the assistance of New Hampshire State Police Forensic Laboratory.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Mark A. Irish and Clyde R. W. Garrigan.

